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period with indefatigable labor, and presenting a more vivid sketch of the gradual rise, decline, and overthrow of the Order than we have seen from any previous writer. Especially in regard to its internal affairs and government are we indebted to him for much new information; and among the chapters which will be read with most interest are those relating to the revenues, expenditures, festivals, councils, and criminal records of the Order, and to the history of the Order in England. Upon all these points Major Porter has collected a great number of curious and instructive details from the most trustworthy authorities.

His style is deficient in those graces which a more practised writer would have given to a narrative so rich in brilliant events, and there are some painful attempts at fine writing. But it must be admitted that the worst written passage in either of the two volumes is the commencement of the first chapter; and in no other instance has he descended to such mere nonsense as at the close of his last chapter. Between these extreme points, his style, though never elegant and not always correct, is sufficiently clear and explicit. His military education has given him much skill in the description of battles and sieges; and the best portions of his History are those devoted to the two sieges of Rhodes and to the heroic defence of Malta by La Valette, which has also been described with admirable clearness and force by Mr. Prescott in his History of the Reign of Philip II.

In the Appendix are numerous important documents, including a list of the Grand-Masters, a translation of the letter from the Grand-Master Peter D'Aubusson to the Emperor of Germany, containing a narrative of the first siege of Rhodes, and some interesting extracts from a manuscript history of the fortifications of Malta. The volumes are also enriched by portraits of L'Isle Adam and of La Valette from the original paintings in the palace at Malta, and by some other illustrations.

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8. — *Fragmentary Remains, Literary and Scientific, of SIR HUMPHRY DAVY, BART., late President of the Royal Society, etc. With a Sketch of his Life, and Selections from his Correspondence.* Edited by his Brother, JOHN DAVY, M.D., F.R.S. London: John Churchill. 1858. 8vo. pp. 330.

THE materials of which this volume is composed are neither extensive nor very valuable. They consist almost exclusively of letters, and a few note-books which came into Dr. Davy's possession on the death of his brother's widow in May, 1855. These he has connected by some explanatory remarks, and by a succinct sketch of Sir Humphry Davy's

personal history, referring the reader for fuller details to the *Life of Davy* by Dr. Paris, and to the two *Memoirs* by himself. Dr. Davy's style is singularly awkward and ill-compacted; and we have rarely seen a worse written work by any educated person. A school-boy who should not write a more correct English style, would be a proper subject for discipline. His arrangement too is confused and defective; and the selections from his brother's correspondence are printed with very little regard to chronological order. Indeed, Dr. Davy's conception of the duties of an editor appears to be restricted to a vague notion that letters addressed to the same person should, if possible, be printed together. Hence, we have on one page a letter written in 1826, and on the next page a letter written in 1821; and this confusion prevails throughout the volume. Many of the letters, too, are printed without their dates; and it is only by the internal evidence that the reader can conjecture to what period they belong. We may also add, that good taste would have suggested to Dr. Davy the propriety of abstaining from any unfavorable remarks in reference to his brother's widow. Whatever infelicities there may have been in any part of Sir Humphry Davy's married life, it is certainly indecorous for any member of his family to bring the subject before the public, and to assert that his wife "was not qualified for domestic life," and that she was neither happy in herself, nor fitted to impart happiness to others.

The most interesting portions of the volume are the letters from the poets Southey and Coleridge, and those from Sir Humphry to his wife during his last illness. There are also two letters from Miss Edgeworth, relative to her father's book on Professional Education, and numerous other familiar letters. The selections from Davy's note-books are mostly confined to brief memoranda, suggested by his reading or his experiments. Several poetical pieces, composed at different periods of his life, have, however, been selected from them, and are scattered through the volume, but they do not possess much poetical merit; and the only one which is at all noticeable is a short piece written upon seeing a pair of eagles teaching their young to fly. This we may venture to cite, although it is printed in Davy's collected Works:—

"The mighty birds still upward rose  
In slow but constant and most steady flight,  
The young ones following; and they would pause,  
As if to teach them how to bear the light,  
And keep the solar glory full in sight.  
So went they on, till from excess of pain  
I could no longer bear the scorching rays;  
And when I looked again they were not seen,  
Lost in the brightness of the solar blaze.

Their memory left a type and a desire :  
 So should I wish towards the light to rise,  
 Instructing younger spirits to aspire  
 Where I could never reach amidst the skies,  
 And joy below to see them lifted higher,  
 Seeking the light of purest glory's prize :  
 So would I look on splendor's brightest day  
 With an undazzled eye, and steadily  
 Soar upward full in the immortal ray,  
 Through the blue depths of the unbounded sky,  
 Portraying wisdom's matchless purity ;  
 Before me still a lingering ray appears,  
 But broken and prismatic, seen through tears,  
 The light of joy and immortality."

Though most of the papers and letters in this volume are of comparatively little interest and value, we think that they leave in the reader's mind a higher idea of Davy's personal character, and of his uniform devotion to science, than has been sometimes entertained. His reputation in his own day was very great ; and his lecture-room was a place of fashionable resort. But it has sometimes been doubted whether this fame had a solid foundation. De Quincey somewhere says, "Of all the eminent persons whom I have ever seen, even by a casual glimpse, Davy was the most agreeable to know on the terms of a slight acquaintance" ; and he further expresses the opinion, that this impression would not have been altered for the worse on a closer connection. From Davy's private and familiar correspondence it is easy to discover those personal qualities which made him so popular in the lecture-room and in society ; and it is also clear that even in the midst of social enjoyments, and when most immersed in fashionable life, he did not relax his interest in scientific pursuits. He still prosecuted his researches with that persistent energy which gave him a place, as Lord Brougham happily expresses it, "highest among all the great discoverers of his time." It is on his discoveries, rather than on his lectures or his printed papers, that his fame must rest.

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9. — *Dictionnaire Universel des Contemporains, contenant toutes les Personnes notables de la France et des Pays Etrangers, avec leurs Noms, Prénoms, Surnoms, et Pseudonymes, le Lieu et la Date de leur Naissance, leur Famille, leurs Débuts, leur Profession, leurs Fonctions Successives, leurs Grades et Titres, leurs Actes Publics, leurs Œuvres, leurs Ecrits et les Indications Bibliographiques qui s'y rapportent, les Traits caractéristiques de leur Talent, etc.* Ouvrage